THE NEWER DISTRICTS OF ONTARIO

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE SETTLERS.

RAINY RIVER VALLEY
WABIGOON COUNTRY
TEMISCAMINGUE
ALGOMA.

REPORT OF INSPECTION BY MR. DUNCAN ANDERSON, OF RUGBY, ONT., UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

TORONTO:
WARWICK BRO'S & RUTTER, PRINTERS, ETC., 68 AND 70 FRONT ST. W.
1898.

THE NEWER DISTRICTS OF ONTARIO

RAINY RIVER VALLEY, WABIGOON COUNTRY, ALGOMA, AND TEMISCAMINGUE.

Rugby, August 10th, 1898.

To the Hon. John Dryden,
Minister of Agriculture,
Toronto.

Sir,—In accordance with instructions received from you, I proceeded to Northern and Northwestern Ontario, and made an examination of the following sections, namely :—Port Arthur and vicinity, the Wabigoon country, the Rainy River valley, the Temiscamingue district, and the country around Sault Ste. Marie.

In my examination, I endeavored, as directed by you, to secure such facts as would suggest themselves to a practical man as being useful to prospective settlers, having in mind the nature of the soil, the different kinds of timber, the difficulties of clearing, ease of access, climate, markets, kinds of crop grown, water supply, drainage, etc., and the advances that have been made.

I started on my tour of investigation about the middle of May. I left Toronto on the Canadian Pacific Railway, travelled over 1,000 miles west to Port Arthur, where I made a close examination of the land on the White Fish, Kaministiquia and Slate River valleys, and went over the townships of McIntyre, Oliver, Neebing and Paipoonge.

THE PORT ARTHUR SECTION.

This district was first brought before the public a good many years ago. It was then the overland route to the western prairies. The soil varies from a clay to a sandy loam. There are some gravelly ridges, and in sections some stony land. In some parts the soil is red clay. Rocky ridges hem in the White Fish and Slate River valleys.

The timber is principally poplar, spruce, jack pine, white birch, cedar, and tamarac. In some places a second growth covers the land, while in others the clearing is easily done, especially in the Slate River valley. Three or four days' work of a man is sufficient to clear an acre and make it ready for the plow, but where it is heavy timber land the clearing is more difficult.

The crops grown are hay, wheat, barley, oats, spring wheat, potatoes, turnips, and all kinds of vegetables and small fruits. Pasture is good; there are hundreds of acres of thin bush land, grown up with native grass. It affords fine grazing facilities for droves of young cattle. This ought to be a first-class section, especially for the raising of young stock and dairy products. Some of the lower lands will require draining, but as the country is generally rolling, and the bulk of the land has a porous sub-soil, surface water will not give the farmers much trouble.

This section is well watered by natural springs and running creeks, with plenty of good well water for the digging, which is generally found at a depth of from 15 to 25 feet.

The local markets are good. Port Arthur is quite an important town. It is situated on Thunder Bay, at the western end of Lake Superior, and on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Within three or four miles of Port Arthur is Fort William. These towns are connected by an electric railway. Fort William has a population of about two thousand inhabitants. The town is situated on the banks of the Kaministiquia river. Here are a large number of grain elevators; one in particular is of most modern design, consisting of six or eight tanks built of steel plates. At a distance they resemble two rows of round silos. The wheat from the west is unloaded from the cars into the elevator, from which it is transhipped into lake barges. This is the terminal point of the Canadian Pacific Railway lake traffic. Not far up the river from Fort William is the Kakabeka falls. The river (immediately above the falls) is 130 feet wide, and the water has a straight drop of 110 feet. The estimated capacity of it is between 30,000 and 35,000 horse power. For ease of access and convenience in utilizing, this splendid natural water power at Kakabeka can hardly be excelled on the American continent.

Port Arthur and Fort William are both good local markets. The prices for farm products are high, and beef, pork, butter, eggs, poultry, potatoes, small fruits and vegetables, always find a ready sale at good prices. There are some rich silver mines in the near vicinity, some of which are now being worked, causing a still larger demand for all kinds of farm products.

THE WABIGOON COUNTRY.

Having finished my examination of the land in the vicinity of Port Arthur, I went west on the Canadian Pacific Railway main line, 217 miles, when I reached the town of Dryden, which is in the centre of the Wabigoon district. It and the town of Wabigoon, which is about 12 miles east of Dryden, are the two most important centres of population between Port Arthur and Rat Portage. This agricultural section is midway between Fort William on Lake Superior to the east, and the city of Winnipeg to the west. The Canadian Pacific Railway passes through the district. The fertile land extends for forty miles along the railway line from Dinorwick to Eagle River.

It is estimated that the area of good agricultural land in this district is about 170,000 acres, enough to form a fair sized county, comprising the townships of Wainwright, Van Horne, Eton, Rugby, Sandford, Aubrey and Zealand, with another yet unsurveyed around Dinorwick. The area now located is about 30,000 acres.

The land is rolling, and very little low, flat, or swamp land can be seen. Few people would believe that there is any land suitable for farming between Lake Superior and Lake of the Woods, but if at Dryden they would go inland from the railway six or eight miles, they would find some very comfortable farm homes. In one or two of the townships the country is broken with rocky ridges, but others are almost entirely free from rock or stone.

THE SOIL.

The soil is quite uniform in character, and consists of a strong grey-colored clay, which changes in the lower sections to clay loam. On the creek bottoms the soil is very rich, and heavier timbered, making the clearing more difficult. On the rolling upland the clay seems to be of a drier nature, and will require much more rain or moisture than the loamier soil in the same neighborhood. I saw no gravelly soil and very little sand. In the neighborhood of the junction between the Pelican and Wabigoon rivers, judging from the luxuriant growth in the bush of wild peas, wild currants, and native grass, I should say that the soil is more of a loamy nature, and presents a very favorable situation to the intending settler. Not much of the land in this locality has yet been taken up. The soil all over the district is exceptionally free from boulders and rolling stone. The clay that crumbles when worked and cultivated, is very productive; but where it is of a dry flaky nature, it will require either manure or green crops plowed in to put life into and quicken it before it will give the best results.

The Timber.

The timber consists of a growth of small poplars, a few spruce, with here and there a tamarac, but the greater bulk of the timber is jack pine—a resinous fir that predominates throughout the whole country. The settler can make very good wages cutting jack pine into cord-wood, for which there is always a ready cash sale, at from $1.65 to $1.80 per cord delivered at railroad. It is shipped to Winnipeg in box cars, where it is used as fuel. It is handled at all seasons of the year. In three months 240 car-loads were shipped from Dryden to Winnipeg. A large portion of the timber is dead, recent fires having killed it, and it is this dead jack pine that helps to keep the people of Winnipeg warm. Tamarac ties, eight feet long, sell at 25 cts. each, while ties of the same material twelve feet, are worth 40 cents. For the first few years the settlers will have remunerative winter work chopping and hauling cordwood and making ties. The country has not all been burned over, and to the south, east and north-east there is a thick forest growth of small green timber which is easily cleared. The bulk of the timber throughout the whole country is small, ranging from three to ten inches in thickness, and in some places there is no timber whatever, with here and there a small poplar scrub. In fact there are large areas at the present time almost fit for the plow. The timber has been burned off nearly clean, and the land is growing up with native grass and wild peas.

The Climate.

At Wabigoon the climate is very healthy. The summers are moderately warm, with cool nights, and heavy dews. The fall months are generally dry, with plenty of sunlight. The winters are steadily cold, but free from blizzards, and from chilly rains and slushy thaws. Some seasons the snow-fall is light. This spring most of the seed was sown in April, but generally the seeding is done about the first week in May.

Although crops have been grown for three or four seasons, summer frosts are unknown. In passing through the district on the 18th of July, I stayed over a day and made a hurried second examination of the crops. Potatoes that were planted in the latter part of May had made rapid growth; they were rank, green and healthy. The withering blight of the severe frost of July 10th, which was felt with such damaging effect over a large part of Ontario, hurt neither the crops nor the tenderest vegetables in this section, for I saw potatoes, beans, corn, tomatoes, citrons, and cucumbers, fresh, green, healthy, and growing well. Summer frosts have not done any damage here. Plowing usually begins about the last week in April and finishes about the second week in November.

Water Supply.

Water can be had for the digging on almost every farm at from ten to twenty-five feet deep. I tasted the water from a number of the wells, and found it pure, cool and good. The country is generally well watered. Wabigoon lake is a beautiful sheet of water, about thirty miles long by five or six miles wide. At Dryden a dam has been formed to deepen the lake, so as to help navigation. From the lake the Wabigoon river, a broad, navigable stream, with abundant water power, flows north and west through the townships of Wainwright, Eton and Sandford. The Pelican river flows from Pelican lake, in the township of Rugby, through that township and four or five miles into the township of Eton, when it joins the Wabigoon. The township of Aubrey is bounded on one side by Eagle lake. From this it will be seen that the country is particularly well watered.

Roads.

For a new country, the roads are good; the soil is naturally suitable, for when once graded, except in a very wet time, it is quite comfortable travelling. Twenty-three miles of colonization roads have been built by the Government, and twenty-five more miles have been cut out by the settlers. I drove through the bush on old lumber roads in a buck-board Bicycles are running on the roads for five or six miles from the town of Dryden. By this it will be seen that it is comparatively an easy matter for a new settler to get his household and farm effects in to his location.

Clearing the Land.

As the timber is small and much of it dead, it is easily burned and the land made ready for the plow. A man and strong boy can in some places clear up and stump as fast as a team can plow. One settler who came from the county of York, (he was a tenant farmer there) has a couple of good working boys. He located in the township of Eton close to Oxdrift station, arriving about the beginning of last April. He started to plow on the 18th of the same month and by the 15th of May had twenty-five acres cleaned up, plowed, and sown with wheat, oats, peas and barley. I was at his place on the 28th of May; he had planted his potatoes and corn, and was preparing his turnip land. I held the plow for a couple of rounds and had the satisfaction of knowing that I turned up to the summer sun some of the virgin soil of the Wabigoon country. The land is not all quite so easily cleared as this, but five dollars an acre will clear up and stump most of the land in this settlement, with the exception of land along the creek bottoms, which is heavier timbered. To get the best results the land should be plowed twice, and thoroughly cultivated previous to sowing the first crop.

Fencing, Buildings, Etc.

Cedar posts and wire make the best and most durable fences. The old-fashioned zig-zag fence will find no place here. Some farmers are building good strong, durable fences out of tamarac and spruce poles, without posts, fastening the stakes and riders together with pliable oiled wire. With the exception of not being pig proof, it makes a cheap, serviceable, and, when well built, a strong fence.

Some of the buildings are old-fashioned log structures, dove-tailed or notched at the corners. Saw-mills are convenient. Custom sawing is done for $3 per thousand feet. On many of the lots there is some spruce and tamarac that would make small saw-logs. Good sound lumber can be bought at the mills for $10 or $11 per thousand feet.

Markets.

The local markets of Dryden and Wabigoon will consume all that can be raised for some time in the district. Dryden has a population of 600, while Wabigoon is a rapidly growing town, which is likely to become a mining centre of some importance, for the region between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the American border is rich, not only in timber but in deposits of gold, iron, and other minerals. Eighty miles west is Rat Portage, a growing town of over 5,000 inhabitants. It is not situated in an agricultural district, and so has been getting its food supplies from Manitoba. The towns of Rat Portage, Keewatin, Dryden, and Wabigoon will consume all the beef, pork, butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables, small fruits, hay, oats, and potatoes that the Wabigoon farmer will be able to produce for some time to come, and so his market will be at his very door. In summer, the mining camps afford the farmers an excellent home market for their produce. Butter brings from 20 to 25 cents per lb.; eggs, from 18 to 20 cents per dozen. In winter the lumber camps and railway tie camps afford a market equally as good.

Cost of Getting to Wabigoon.

By the all-rail route on the Canadian Pacific Railway, from any station west of Kingston, the single fare is $21; children half rate. For boat and rail by way of Owen Sound and Fort William, the fare is $17. Car of 20,000 pounds of settlers' effects from same points, $60 (one man with each car free); 30½ cents per 100 lbs. for all over weight. For settlers' effects, shipped in less than car lots, the rate is 61 cents per 100 pounds.

The Pioneer Farm.

The Ontario Government was the pioneer of the Wabigoon country. In the spring of 1895 the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. John Dryden,

personally selected the site for the house and barn, and commenced farming operations with the view of testing the agricultural capabilities of the section. A small crop was put in that summer, consisting of wheat, oats, barley, grass and a few roots. In the early summer a warm, comfortable house was built, such as any settler of moderate means might erect. Later, a basement barn with the necessary accommodation was added. At the present time there are 130 acres cleared and stumped, so that all kinds of labor-saving machinery can be used to the best advantage. Last fall and this spring being very dry until the second week in June, fall wheat and hay were not heavy crops, but the spring wheat, oats, barley, and turnips gave promise of large yields. The farm is surrounded by a substantial cedar post and wire fence. The farm buildings are across the railroad track and almost directly opposite the railway station. A young orchard has been planted, but the standard apples have not done well. Crab apples and cherries made a fairly promising growth, and small fruits do well. As I stood at the back of the farm and looked to the railway station, a pleasing rural scene filled the eye,—a fifty-acre field of oats just beginning to shoot, another field of heavy spring wheat and barley waving in the wind, and just beyond, the dark green of a healthy field of Swede turnips: a flock of Shropshire sheep were nibbling in the home field next the barn, while half a dozen useful milch cows were industriously grazing the young tender grass which recent rains had caused to cover the pasture fields, while the farm team was just finishing the plowing of a ten acre fallow field that had been grubbed, stumped and burned this summer. The Pioneer Farm has demonstrated very clearly the excellent agricultural advantages of this section by changing it in four short years from wild, waste land to clean fields and a well cultivated farm. From what I have seen in the Wabigoon country, I know from my own experience in clearing land that a working farmer of moderate means with an industrious family (if not afraid of flies for a few weeks in the heat of summer for the first few years, and other drawbacks incident to pioneer life), can in five or six years have 100 acres cleared and free from both stumps and stones. Thus many men who are now forced to work for others, if they were to put forth an effort and deny themselves some of the luxuries of life, could in a few years become independent, by having a very comfortable farm home of their own in the Wabigoon country.

The advantages of the Wabigoon country may be summed up as follows:

1. Cheap land and easily cleared (fifty cents per acre on easy terms).
2. The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway passes right through the agricultural belt.
3. The best of local markets.
4. Sufficient timber for building, fencing and fuel.
5. The country is well watered with rivers, creeks and wells.

6. The soil and climate are particularly well adapted to the growing of fall and spring wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, turnips, and all kinds of vegetables and small fruits. Corn and standard apples don't seem to do so well, unless it be the very hardiest varieties.

7. Grasses grow in great luxuriance.

8. A very healthy climate.

9. Good roads for a new country.

10. Plenty of winter work in the lumber camps; also hauling and chopping cordwood.

RAT PORTAGE.

Having made a thorough examination of the agricultural resources of the Wabigoon country, I visited the town of Rat Portage, which is about eighty miles west from Dryden and 130 miles east of the city of Winnipeg. Rat Portage is the principal town between Lake Superior and Winnipeg. It has a population of between five and six thousand. Its citizens are a pushing, enterprising, public spirited people. The town is growing rapidly. The buildings of later years are durably built and of modern design. The town is situated at the northern end of Lake of the Woods, and is a divisional point on the Canadian Pacific Railway: it is also the commercial and judicial centre for that part of Western Algoma. It is the shipping port of Lake of the Woods. All the telegraph poles, railway ties, fence posts, and in fact all the timber from the Rainy River country, including sawn lumber, passes through this point on its way west to Manitoba. The Lake of the Woods and its tributary lakes, rivers and streams abound in fish. The fishing industry here has become one of considerable importance, so that Rat Portage, with its suburbs of Norman and Keewatin, is destined to become a very populous centre. These two villages are only a few miles from the town, with which they are connected by a good road, and in the summer steam ferry boats make hourly trips between these villages and Rat Portage. At Keewatin there is an immense water power, partly developed. Here is situated the Lake of the Woods mill, which is the largest flour mill in the Dominion, having a capacity of two thousand barrels a day, and elevators that will hold nearly five hundred thousand bushels of wheat. The manufacturing of flour and its bye-products, bran and shorts, has become an industry on which Rat Portage can permanently rely. In connection with the flour mill there is a barrel and siding factory which turns out about one thousand flour barrels per day; also house siding, planed, matched and all ready to put on in four feet lengths, large quantities of which are shipped to the Southern States. A few rods from the flour mill is situated the customs reduction works, where gold and silver is separated from the rock. A mill of this kind must materially

tend to develop the mineral resources of this mining region, for they crush as low as ten ton lots. With a fishing, mining, lumbering, and manufacturing industry, Rat Portage will be a centre of wealth and population that will always afford a first-class market for the products of the farm.

THE RAINY RIVER VALLEY.

After spending a day in Rat Portage and vicinity, I took passage on the steamer "Edna Brydges" for Rainy river, sailing down Lake of the Woods for about one hundred miles till the mouth of the river is entered at Hungry Hall; then eastward up the river to Fort Frances. It is on this stretch of river from that the agricultural land is situated. I made a close inspection of the soil, timber, crops, market, etc., at five different points on the river, viz.:—Pine Wood, Boucherville, Emo Big Forks, and Fort Frances, stopping a few days at each point and travelling on foot inland and through the adjacent townships.

The Country.

The Rainy River country proper is a strip of agricultural land on the north side of the river of that name. It is from fifteen to twenty miles wide, and is estimated to contain about six hundred thousand acres of good farming land. The Rainy river finds its source in Rainy lake, and its outlet in Lake of the Woods. It is about eighty miles long, and for its whole length forms the boundary line between Canada and the United States. On the north side is the Province of Ontario; on the south is the State of Minnesota. The surface of the country is fairly level, and nothing like a hill is to be seen; but generally speaking, it has a gentle roll towards the river. There is a small percentage of swamp land which is well timbered with cedar, and now and then a patch of muskeg, which is found here and there all over the district. Along the river front the land is entirely free from stone, but as you get further inland, some of the lots have a little stone on them. Mr. James Conmee, M.P.P., for West Algoma, says that the good land is not confined to the river valley alone, but extends north-easterly along the shore of Lake of the Woods, and estimates that the agricultural land in this section covers an area of four million acres. I had a conversation with Mr. Alex. Luttrell, Road Foreman, a very practical man and keen observer, who a few years ago cut a winter road through to Little Grassy river. He informed me that much of the unsurveyed section of the Grassy river country is fine farming land.

Climate.

The climate is very healthy. The winter is of an even temperature, colder than around Toronto, but a clear bracing air with an entire absence of damp, chilly, searching, raw winds. There is always plenty of snow

for sleighing from the middle of December to the end of March. When the snow melts and the ground gets bare, the growing season sets in. Most of the seeding was done this year in April. In summer the days are warm but the nights cool, with very heavy dews. The climate is well adapted for the growth of grass and all kinds of cereals. Native Indian corn matures to perfection, and in some seasons melons and tomatoes. The plow is generally stopped about the 20th of November.

The Timber.

The timber consists of white pine, poplar, tamarac, spruce, balsam, cedar, birch, and a few oaks, elms, ashes, and soft maples Lumbering operations are carried on extensively on both Rainy river and Lake of the Woods—in fact the river is sometimes full of pine logs, especially in the early part of the summer when the drive is being pushed forward to the boom. It is estimated that from six to eight hundred men are employed in the lumber camps every winter. Most of the timber on the farm lands that has any commercial value is cedar, tamarac and spruce. In winter the settlers take out telegraph poles 25 feet long at 45 cents; railway ties, 16 cents a piece, cribbed: fence posts, 5 cents each, cribbed; and cord wood from $1.30 to $1.70. One farmer I met had taken out $200 worth of ties last winter. The steamboats use the cord wood. It will be seen that the settler who does not care to go to the lumber camps in winter can do fairly well working up his own timber at home.

The Soil.

The soil is the foundation of all agricultural success if it is naturally rich and is so composed that it will withstand the extremes of drouth and wet. The owner of such a farm has a source of income that will never fail. There are thousands of such farms in this district. While the soil is not altogether of one quality but ranges from a black, rich, productive clay to a clay and sandy loam, nearly all of it is very fertile. Where the country has been burned over, it is covered with a rank growth of wild clover. Native grass, peas and vetches were growing luxuriantly in the early part of June. Nearly all the land fronting on the river is suitable for settlement, but as you get back from the river inland, there is some stone, with here and there a rocky bluff, but the soil is good.

Water.

There is a plentiful supply of good well water at from eight to twenty-five feet deep. Water is generally struck when a gravel bed is reached. Streams intersect the whole country throughout. The land is well watered. Some of the low lands will require to be ditched, for which there is plenty of fall. The water runs in some places for miles where the roads are graded.

Roads.

For a new country the roads are passable when you consider the nature of the soil and the scarcity of road-making material. The Government grants large sums yearly for the opening up of new roads. The settlers only are employed on the colonization roads, for which work they receive $1 per day and board. A few more years at the rate roads are now being built will open up the entire arable belt.

Clearing Land.

In some localities where the land is heavily timbered, and the land low, the clearing is difficult, but in other sections, where the bush has been burned over, it is comparatively easy to clear. I stood at the south-east corner of a settler's farm in the township of Shenstone. He had located two years ago. The farm sloped gently to the south and you could see his whole location, there being neither hill nor tree to block the sight. The soil was a clay and sand loam. He had twenty acres of crop in. It was very easily cleared and there were no stumps. All he had to pay for the 160 acres was 75 cents, which is merely the fee to the land agent for making out the affidavit, the land being free grant. The timbered land will cost from $12 to $18 an acre to chop, log and fence. The stumps come out in from eight to ten years, but in some townships there are large areas of "brule," or burnt land, which takes very little labor to make ready for the plow. So the difficulties of clearing are largely a matter of choice with the settler when he locates, whether he chooses a timbered or a burned lot. Fencing and building material is plentiful; some of the cedar is as fine as you can find anywhere in the Province. For building, rough lumber can be bought at the mills from $7 to $10; dressed lumber from $16 to $20; pine shingles, $2; custom sawing $3 per thousand feet.

Crops and Productiveness.

Fall and spring wheat, barley, peas, oats, potatoes, and all kinds of vegetables grow exceedingly well. Clover crowds out the timothy. I saw fields of clover that were seeded in 1894 and 1895 that had last year yielded over three tons to the acre; this season they had the appearance of giving as heavy a crop. You could scarcely find a blade of timothy but the clover was rank, broad-leaved, healthy and green, and had all the indications of a heavy crop although seeded four and five years ago. Mr. Robert Watson has clover that has been cut twelve successive times. Mr. Phair says that clover seeded down twelve years has been cut twice every year. They don't know what it is to miss a catch of grass. Most practical farmers admit that clover is the most important plant grown on

the farm, keeping the farm clean of weeds, maintaining and increasing its fertility, besides yielding a great bulk of fodder, which, when well cured and fed in winter, brings our stock nearer to summer conditions than any other food grown

The testimony of some old residents in this section is very valuable, and has much weight. Mr. Arch. Reid, a very worthy settler, who has been here a number of years, and now has the satisfaction of seeing his family settling around him, says: "My crops have been good; they would average, wheat 22 bushels, oats 45 bushels, peas 30 bushels to the acre. Hay is always a heavy crop; native Indian corn gives good returns; potatoes always do well, and so do turnips." Mr. Williams, Fort Frances, says, "I have a quarter of an acre garden patch. Sold last year $140 worth of vegetables—one cabbage weighed 37 lbs. I had in my store window last fall a pumpkin that weighed 100 lbs., and a squash that weighed 125 lbs. (they were both raised by Mr. John Dingal), and have grown radishes and lettuce in the open air on the 10th of May." Mr. William Phair also bears testimony to the extraordinary productiveness of the soil: he says, "produced 49 bushels of Fife wheat per acre: 270 bushels of oats on four acres; between two and three tons of timothy per acre, first crop cut in June, second crop early in September." Mr. Thomas Lundry (whose farm I travelled over and found that the soil is a strong rich productive clay, as is almost all the soil in the townships of Carpenter, Lash and Delvin) says: "The soil on Rainy river cannot be surpassed. You can sow barley on new ground as late as the middle of July and get a good crop. My neighbor, Duncan Reid, sowed two bags of wheat, about four bushels, and threshed ninety-six bushels. Where the ground is properly cultivated, I don't care what you plant you will get a crop. There is plenty of pasture in the bush: and fall and spring wheat do immense." From what I saw when there last summer, the splendid crop prospects, the excellent climatic conditions for growth, and from the nature of the soil, I believe there is no more fertile soil in the Province of Ontario, and I question if there is another tract any more productive on this continent.

Markets.

The local markets are good, the rapid development of the lumbering and mining industries having created a demand for all kinds of farm produce which as yet the farmers have not been able to supply.

Mr. Reid says: "The prices I have received for my crops would average, oats 50 cents, potatoes 50 cents per bushel, butter 20 to 25 cents per lb., eggs 18 to 22 cents per doz., beef, dressed, $7 to $8, pork $8 to $10, hay, $9 per ton. This spring, prices were somewhat higher: at Emo, a village about half way up the river, wheat $1, oats 75 cents, peas $1.25, potatoes 75 cents per bushel, butter 25 cents per lb., eggs 25

cents per dozen, pork, dressed, $10, beef $10, hay $10 per ton, mutton from 8 to 10 cents per lb, poultry, dressed, from 12½ to 15 cents per lb. Young sound working horses, from four to six years old, weighing between 1200 and 1400 pounds, bring from $100 to $120. Fresh calved milch cows in spring bring from $35 to $42; weaned pigs $4 to $5 a pair."

Means of Access.

At present Rat Portage, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, at the northern extremity of Lake of the Woods, is the point to aim for. It is distant from Toronto by rail 1,154 miles. From Rat Portage to Fort Frances is 180 miles. Rainy River is 80 miles long, and the length of Lake of the Woods from north to south is 100 miles. The steamboat fare from Rat Portage to Emo, first-class is $4.00, second class $2.65 Fare along the river from local stations is five cents per mile. Freight from Rat Portage to Emo: Settlers effects, 20 cents per hundred pounds; horses per head, $4.50; cattle, $4.00; hogs, $1.00; sheep, 50 cents. These rates include cost of transfer from cars or freight shed and wharfage at Rat Portage. A carload of settler's effects from Toronto to Rat Portage, one man free, costs about $62.

Railway.

I am pleased to know that the contract has been let for the first section of the Rainy River Railway, which is to connect with the Port Arthur and Western line at Stanley station, about twenty miles west of the town of Port Arthur, and that in a short time it will be pushed through to the agricultural belt on the Rainy river. Nothing that I am aware of has the same influence towards opening up a new country as direct railway communication with the outside world, for it brings with it the knowledge that the productive powers of a country need never be limited for the want of a market.

When the railway penetrates the arable land of the Rainy river, settlement will advance rapidly and the land will be cleared and better tilled. New men settling there will introduce advanced methods which will act as object lessons to the older settlers. This must result in the cultivation of a spirit of wholesome emulation, causing many to widen their base by making larger clearings and relying more on the farm and less on timber for a living. While the local market here is exceptionally good, caused by the allied industries of lumbering and mining, yet the best agricultural results can only be obtained when there is constant direct daily communication with the outside so that the producer will be able to keep himself in close touch, not only with his own local market, but with the markets in the large industrial and commercial centres as well.

It is almost a pity to see so much of the best of the land here occupied as Indian reserves. There are five or six of them along the river bank. If some amicable arrangement could be made between the Indians and the Dominion Government so that these reserves could be opened for settlement, it would materially help the development of the whole country. The banks of the river have been settled for years. The older settlers combined trapping, fishing, hunting, and working in the lumber camps with farming. Another class that came in some years later, principally from the counties of Huron and Bruce, have kept closer and worked more steadily on their farms. Some of them have large clearings, free from stumps, and are using nearly all kinds of labor-saving machinery. Many have their married sons and daughters located near the parental home.

Conclusions.

(1) That there are schools and churches in almost every part of the settled sections.

(2) That plenty of employment can be had at any season of the year in the lumber camps, on the roads, and at the mines; and that wages are good.

(3) The flies are bad on stock for a month and a half in mid-summer, requiring the cattle to be put in the stable during the day time.

(4) The winters are bright and clear.

(5) As a stock and dairy country it cannot be surpassed.

(6) Local markets are good and likely to continue, as it is closely adjacent to the mining regions.

(7) That one can have an easily cleared farm by locating on the burned land, or if a timbered lot be chosen, the settler will have plenty of profitable winter work at his own home as long as the timber lasts.

(8) Good natural drainage, and splendid spring and well water.

(9) That preseverance and industry will bring its reward in a good comfortable farm home, and a working man with limited means who wants a home can get it here.

THE SAULT STE MARIE SECTION.

Around Sault Ste. Marie, at Goulais Bay, in the townships on the Sault Ste. Marie branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and on St. Joseph Island, the best of the land has been taken up, but at nearly all of these points, there are yet some lots fit for settlement, with from 30 to 60 per cent. of fairly good arable land. At Goulais Bay and in the township of Vankoughnet, part of the lands belong to the Dominion Government, but two-thirds of the township of Vankoughnet is Ontario Government land. This township is open for settlement; it is about 26

miles from Sault Ste. Marie and is reached by wagon road. The land around Goulais Bay varies from a clay to a sandy yellow loam. You will sometimes find several kinds of soil on the same lot. The country is somewhat broken and the land is generally in the valleys hemmed in by rocky ridges. The best soil is a sandy loam, which, when intelligently cultivated, gives very profitable results. Two-thirds of the timber on the uplands is hard sugar maple, iron wood, and black and yellow birch. The low lands have, in addition to maple and birch, balsam, spruce and a few tamarac. The maple land is not as difficult to clear, as the timber is more easily burned. The cost of clearing would be from $12 to $15 an acre.

Fine natural springs and splendid clear running streams abound, and good well water can be obtained everywhere near the surface. Only the very low lands require draining. The soil being mostly a sandy loam with an open, porous sub-soil, the surplus moisture readily soaks through it.

Wheat, both fall and spring, does well. Oats in the early part of July were in many places two and one-half feet high and not beginning to shoot The oat fields had a fine appearance and gave promise of a heavy crop. The loamy soil of this section seems to be especially well adapted for the growth of cereals, peas, barley and hay. Potatoes on the high dry land looked well, but on the low swampy lands they had a set back from summer frosts. There is not much corn raised as the season is too short for it to mature every year. Turnips are always a sure crop. Apples do well, especially the hardier standard varieties. I have formed opinion based on careful observations that, where the sugar maple grows, apple trees will thrive. I saw a number of fine young orchards, with clean-barked, healthy-looking trees, just coming into bearing.

The market is the town of Sault Ste. Marie. It is good for all kinds of farm produce. When a new road that is in process of construction is finished, it will bring Goulais Bay within 20 miles of Sault Ste. Marie. The people here seem to be well satisfied with their farms for few want to sell them.

St. Joseph Island.

This island is situated at the entrance to Ste. Mary's river. It is about 20 by 14 miles, and contains about 92,000 acres. It is all located but 4,000 acres. The soil is very changeable, varying from a stiff red clay to a light loam; but most of the soil is a clay or sandy loam. In many parts the surface is covered with rolling stone, while other sections are entirely free. The rock is principally limestone. The Island is well watered with springs and running creeks. The crops grown are the same as in the older sections of Ontario. The timber is hemlock, basswood, beech, maple, ironwood, spruce, cedar and elm. Here partly cleared farms can be bought from $150 to

$1,000, according to soil and improvements. Persons with small capital could, for a few hundred dollars, purchase a partly cleared farm. Men who have had little experience in selecting a farm in the bush, may make a mistake, but on a partly cleared farm, even if it is stumpy and rough, they have much better opportunities of judging the soil and surroundings than where it is in an unbroken forest. But they should be very careful to see that the title is good and that the location is in all respects a suitable one. All along the main line from Garden river to Massey, the pea crop looked well—the best I had seen anywhere this season. Here they have no trouble with the pea bug. Peas and pork are the two most profitable lines of production I know of, and make a combination that takes very little fertility from the soil, while hogs give a better return for the food consumed than any other animal we raise on the farm.

TEMISCAMINGUE.

Crossing the Province from Sault Ste. Marie eastward, passing the nickel mines at Sudbury, to Mattawa, then north by rail and boat to Haileybury or to Liskeard, we reach the southern point of the agricultural land in the Temiscamingue district. In a straight line, Liskeard is about 250 miles north of Toronto.

Here there is a large tract of fine farming land, reaching from the northern end of Lake Temiscamingue, north and east. Geographically, it is situated on the 48 parallel, and is a long way south of any part of the Province of Manitoba, being about on the same latitude as the Rainy River. More than one half of the European continent is north of the 48 parallel. Three rivers drain the country into the lake, viz., Montreal, Wahbes, and Blanche or White river. The lake is but a widening of the Ottawa river: it is 68 miles long, and not more than five or six miles wide at its widest place. It is said to be very deep: Temiscamingue means deep water. Geologically, the land is of the same character as that of Southern Ontario. The rock, being the Niagara limestone formation, makes fine building stone and also first class lime. There are three or four lime kilns at Haileybury. The area of agricultural land in the district is estimated to be about 1,250,000 acres.

The Soil.

The soil is very uniform, and consists of a strong rich clay. An analysis made by Professor Shuttleworth, Professor of Chemistry at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, proves that the soil is very rich in phosphoric acid and potash, and that the sub-soil is unusually rich in nitrogen. The timber, chiefly balsam and spruce, is so thick and unbroken that the sun and wind cannot penetrate it. First there is a covering of moss, and then about four inches of vegetable mould, when the clay is reached. This land will stand any amount of cropping, and when

intelligently farmed will give very profitable returns. The surface of the land is smooth with few cradle holes. Upon the river Blanche, there are large tracts of level clay land, which were burned over a few years ago and could be brought into cultivation almost as cheaply as prairie land. It is not yet in the market, however.

Timber.

The timber consists of pine, spruce, balsam, tamarac, cedar, poplar, and a scattering of white oak and black ash. But on the best farming land the timber has very little commercial value, except pine and cedar, which grow to a large size. But the bulk of the timber is balsam and spruce, ranging from five to fourteen inches in diameter.

The settler can get enough of building material, both timber and lumber, for house and out-buildings. There is generally enough cedar for fencing, but unless there is some demand for pulp wood, which cannot be until the railway is built, the quicker the settler gets rid of his timber and gets the stumps out of his land the sooner will he have some ease and comfort in the cultivating of his farm. For a young man to reserve his timber, looking for it to rise in price, would be a serious and almost irreparable mistake, for the land is the most valuable. In part of the Blanche river district the timber has no value whatever, except near the river. On the lowlands, which are sometimes flooded in the spring, the timber is elm, ash, oak, and soft maple, but up the river (which is navigable for small steamers for 25 or 30 miles) the country was burned over some eight or ten years ago, and is very easily cleared. There is no timber on large tracts of it, only scrub poplar, and white birch bushes.

Climate.

The climate is somewhat similar to the other parts of northern Ontario that I have visited. In the winter, steady cold with plenty of snow and not much slushy, soft weather. About the 25th of April the land is fit to work. Seeding generally begins about the first week in May. Potatoes, vegetables and garden stuff are planted about the 24th of May. In the early part of the summer there is generally plenty of rain, warm days, cool nights, with heavy dews, and the growth is rapid. I measured timothy in the last week in June that grew an inch in twelve hours. Barley that was sown on the 11th of June was six inches high on the 28th of the same month. Haying begins about the 15th of July and the harvest a month later. Navigation opens about the 10th of May and closes about the last week in November.

Clearing the Land.

In the the townships around Liskeard and Haileybury, the country is generally covered with a dense mass of small timber, which, when properly chopped into 12 or 14 feet lengths and the brush carefully trimmed, it being evergreen, will, if wind and weather is at all favorable,

be almost sure of a clean burn of brush. As those who have cleared land will know, this materially helps in the final clearing up of the fallow. The cost of the work of clearing if let by contract to chop, log, and fence, but not stump, is from $16 to $18 per acre. From six to eight years after chopping, the land can be stumped. The greatest draw-back in clearing is burning the wind-fallen timber. In an ever-green bush, which is shaded at all seasons of the year, the fallen trees get thoroughly water soaked. The best way to get rid of them is to pile the logs up in heaps, being careful to put the fallen timber on top of the piles, allowing them to remain two or three weeks, before setting them on fire. If there is a good wind, and the time dry, not only will the piles burn, but the fallow will burn over a second time, burning moss, rotten wood and much of the surplus vegetable matter. On light land this second burning is not necessary, in fact the more decayed matter on it the better: but on this fertile, crumbly, calcareous clay, if there is too much mould and waste matter on the surface, the roots of the grain cannot penetrate to the clay soil beneath and the crop is more likely to be affected by summer frosts. Summer frosts, which, like flies, are always troublesome in the first years of settlement, get less frequent and often entirely disappear as the clearings are made larger and the country becomes opened up. But if the crops are rooted in the clay they will stand frosts and the extremes of weather much better than when sitting on the surface, with their roots reaching for food amongst the mould and rotten wood of a partially cleared fallow. In crossing a number of fields of oats (first crops), I noticed that wherever the oat roots had reached the under soil they were strong, healthy and green, but where they were harrowed in amongst a mass of rotten wood, the leaves were touched by the summer frost. Some of the settlers who have had experience in clearing, rake the land over by hand after logging, gathering into small heaps, chips, rotten wood and moss, and burn them off, so that the harrow teeth can reach the soil to mix it with the vegetable surface mould, insuring a safer crop and a far more profitable return. Clearing land is not altogether done by brute force—some skill is required. The most important point is to see that the surface is made so clean that the roots of the first crops will easily reach the clay soil below.

Here, as at the Rainy River, you can locate on the burned lands, and avoid many of the difficulties of clearing a timbered lot. Up the Blanche river, in the townships of Hilliard, Brethour, Ingram, and Evanturel, (some of which are not yet opened for settlement) there are large areas of fine farming lands very easy to clear, where two or three days' work will make an acre ready for the plow. It is therefore a matter of choice whether you locate on a timbered or burned lot.

Drainage.

The natural drainage is good, the numerous creeks and rivers affording sufficient outlet. A few open ditches through any of these lots in the

early stages of settlement would well repay the labor. The soil here will compare favorably with the best lands in southwestern Ontario, but the latter did not give the best returns until they were drained.

Water Supply.

Plenty of water can be had near the surface for the digging. What effect the clearing of the land will have on the water supply, time alone can tell. At present it is plentiful and fairly good. The small creeks are not to be depended upon for house supply, as after rain the water becomes quite muddy and thick from the washings of the clay soil. It is then neither palatable to the taste nor pleasing to the eye. Wells and natural springs must be depended on for the water supply.

The Temiscamingue settlement is quite young. Five years ago there were only about a dozen settlers on the Ontario side of the lake. Now, on the lake and river fronts where the land can easily be reached, the lots have nearly all been taken up. Lack of roads is at present the greatest drawback to settlement.

Crops Grown.

Vegetables of every kind grow to perfection and so do small fruits, while all the cereals grown in southern Ontario, with the exception of the more tender varieties of corn, grow well. Here I saw fine crops of peas, barley, fall and spring wheat, oats, timothy and clover hay, potatoes, etc. Some fields of hay grown on new land amongst the stumps would go over two tons to the acre. A piece of new land in fall wheat, the Surprise variety, on the 25th of June was fully headed out. It was over four and a half feet high and had all the appearance of a heavy crop. The soil seems to be especially adapted to the growth of peas, oats and potatoes. But the best results cannot be obtained from this strong, rich soil until the stumps are taken out and the land plowed into narrow ridges leading to open ditches, so that the surplus water will be quickly carried off. When the plow turns this strong clay up to the action of frost, sunlight and air, it crumbles like air slacked lime into small pieces about the size of peas or wheat, and when farmed under favorable agricultural conditions, yields good crops one year after another without becoming exhausted. On the Quebec side of the lake at Baie des Peres, there is a farm of 350 acres of cultivated land. The principal product is hay. This season they had 180 acres of mixed grass, timothy, common red and a little Alsike clover It was estimated that there would be over 500 tons. Some of the fields had been mown for six years. I never saw so much fine hay growing in one place. The first and second year's cut would yield three and three and a half tons to the acre. This land never had been manured. This farm was in bush previous to 1884, but is now growing immense crops of hay, barley, peas, wheat, oats, potatoes and vegetables, without the aid of either artificial or barnyard manure. They keep about twenty-five head of cattle. The hay is pressed

on the farm and sold to the lumbermen. The oats and potatoes go to the same market. I asked the manager how he could raise such crops without manure. He said, "the soil all through this section is naturally very fertile, but it requires to be well and neatly plowed in narrow ridges fifteen feet wide, so that water will not stand on the land. It also needs to be plowed in the fall, and in the spring given a thorough cultivation." He raises about three thousand bushels of mixed grain,—a mixture of corn, oats and vetches was sown,—for green summer feed for working teams and milk cows. He also says, "to insure a crop of hay don't allow the cattle to pasture on the hay fields in the fall, for it requires all the fall growth of grass to cover, protect and mulch the timothy and clover roots." Here cultivation seems to have changed the color of the soil. On this farm it looked and handled more like a black clay loam. The farm manager had been a resident of Baie des Peres for twenty-four years, and had been farming since 1884, but during that time had never seen the frost do much harm. I asked him what was the difference, naturally, between the soil on his farm and that on the Ontario side of the lake. He said that the land in the township of Dymond was equally as good, if not a better soil; in fact, almost all the land on the Ontario side was the same, and he thought if cultivated in the same way, would give the same profitable returns. At Baie des Peres they are building a grist mill and a cheese factory.

The most northerly point of lake navigation is North Temiscamingue. There I met Mr. Adam Burwash. He has farmed at this point for the past twenty years, and has 120 acres free from stumps and stones. He has all the latest agricultural machinery, including binder, mower, seed drill, horse rake, and a two-horse tread-power threshing machine with a capacity of three hundred bushels of oats a day. Only twice did he see summer and autumn frosts do damage in twenty years. He thinks that as the country gets cleared up frosts and flies will disappear. He gave me his average of crops and prices, as follows: Potatoes 150 bags per acre at 75 cents per bag; oats 35 to 40 bushels per acre at 40 cents per bushel; peas 20 to 25 bushels per acre; wheat 18 to 25 bushels an acre; butter 20 to 25 cents a lb.; eggs 15 to 20 cents a doz.; beef $6.00 to $7.00 per hundred in the fall, and pork $8.00 to $9.00; hay at the barn, pressed, $12.00 a ton. Tomatoes ripen in the open air. The hardiest varieties of apples may do. Native Indian corn ripens well. Milk cows sell at $25.00 in the fall and $30.00 to $35.00 in the spring; horses from $75.00 to $100.00; oxen from $80.00 to $90.00 a yoke; weaned pigs from $4.00 to $5.00 a pair.

About the seasons, Mr. Burwash said that they had more rain than at Lachine, near Montreal, in summer. Snow about two and a half feet deep. The plow was stopped by frost about the 12th November, and started about the last week in April. Seeding generally begins about the first week in May. Milk cows have to be fed from the first of November to

the 10th of May. Winter is clear and cold. He looks forward to the rapid development of the Ontario side of Lake Temiscamingue.

I have given my interviews with these two farmers on the Quebec side because it was impossible to find any one on the Ontario side with more than a few years, agricultural experience. From my own knowledge of soil and farming, I am satisfied that, if the land on the Ontario side was once cleared of stumps and timber, so that the plow and cultivator would work to the best advantage, and the under soil thoroughly worked up with the surface mould, the same results would be obtained as on the farm I have mentioned at Baie des Peres, viz., a rich black clay loam that will profitably produce almost any crop grown in the temperate zone.

Markets.

At present the lumber camps afford excellent market facilities. Hay, oats, pork, beef, potatoes, butter, etc., bring high prices, but as the timber gets further back and the country gets settled, the farmers will have to depend less on the local and more on the outside market. The British market will soon regulate the price of pork, beef and wheat for the farmers of Temiscamingue, as it does for those engaged in agriculture elsewhere. This section is only two hundred and fifty miles in a straight line from the city of Toronto, with eighty miles of railway to build from North Bay into the heart of the best farming land. Temiscamingue farms are as near our ocean port, Montreal, as the farms in any of the counties of Simcoe, York, Halton or Peel. A short railway haul of four hundred and forty miles will take the farm products of this section to the point of transshipment into ocean steamers at Montreal. This is a great advantage when compared with the expense of freighting a distance of fifteen hundred or two thousand miles, which will always be a heavy permanent charge against the farms of the far west. Experience has clearly shown that there is a limit to the distance from the seaboard where products for export can be profitably produced.

Means of Access.

Mattawa, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, is the point to make for, thence north on a branch line about forty miles to Temiscamingue station. The train on this short line runs three times a week. At Temiscamingue station connection is made without delay with a line of lake steamers. The railway and steamboat fare from Toronto is about $13.50. Freight from Toronto to Temiscamingue station is 25c. per hundred pounds, but arrangements can be made with the C.P.R. Freight department so that settlers' effects, by the car-load, will be taken at reduced rates. When the proposed Toronto and James Bay Railway is built, which is, I understand, to be a continuation of the Grand Trunk from North Bay to the north-western shore of Lake Temiscamingue, a distance of eighty-one miles, it would, as a colonization road, soon open up this whole section,

and bring this large tract of fertile farm land in a direct line with and within easy reach of the city of Toronto.

I think it would be wise for the Government to raise the price of land here from fifty cents to one dollar per acre, using the added fifty cents to give increased aid to the first eighty miles of the line. With direct railway communication, the land would soon be taken up. Pulp wood would then have some value. There would be communication with the outside at all seasons. With a railway, Temiscamingue would be in close touch with every part of our province. To the pushing, enterprising, progressive farmer, railway communication is of the first importance, meaning quick transportation and ready access to the world's market. The payment of a dollar per acre would be no draw-back but a strong inducement for the right class of settlers, if they were certain that within the next two or three years there would be direct railway communication.

General Conclusions.

In Ontario there are at least 2,500,000 acres of good land at present available for settlement—enough to absorb our surplus agricultural population for many years. I would not advise farmers in comfortable circumstances to go to a new section and engage in clearing land. But there are some who are encumbered with a heavy mortgage and who have a yearly struggle to meet the interest; tenant farmers, farmers' sons, farm workers, unemployed artisans, and laboring men with strong arms, who have courage and good health—for such there is plenty of room on the unoccupied lands of Ontario. The land is cheap, it is easy of access, the climate is healthy, money can be earned at the lumber camps, the mines and on the colonization roads, so that the settler and his family will be maintained in comfort during the first and second years, until the farm produces enough to support his family. So for the struggling mechanic, day worker, and all those who are putting their labor on the market, there is a better chance for homes in the unlocated land of Ontario than staying in the over-crowded industrial centres, where the cry for work is becoming yearly more acute; for even if such have but a rudimentary knowledge of farming they will be able to learn from their neighbors.

I cannot close this without desiring to thank the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with whom I came in contact, for their kindness and courtesy, which materially assisted me in making a full examination of the sections visited.

From the 16th of May until the 23rd of July, I travelled by rail 6,450 miles; by boat 525 miles; in buggy and buck-board 110 miles; on foot 315 miles. Total 7,400 miles.

DUNCAN ANDERSON,
Rugby, Ont.